

These changes must affect insects of many Orders, but my impression is that the entomology of it all is much less adequately recorded than the botany.

So let us not sit back and bemoan the afforestation of the Breck and the commercialisation of the Cairngorms. Britain is still teeming with insects, and we as amateur entomologists have opportunities that were not available to our predecessors in more stable times.

But I suppose I am prejudiced towards contentment, since I am not a Lepidopterist!

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Notes on some British Serricorn Coleoptera, with Adjustments to the List. 2 – The Malacoderm Families

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HELODIDAE

Microcara bohemani Mann. (*bohemani* auct.).—Kloet & Hincks (1945: 183), following several Continental authors, give this as a good species; with us, it has more often been regarded as a variety of the common *M. testacea* L. (as by Fowler, 1890: 121) or else ignored (as by Joy, 1932). Its true status may well be still in doubt. Thus, Horion (1951: 255) includes it only with reserve, as from north and middle Europe, and marks it 'spec. propria?'. Reitter (1911: 244) gives it as a species without question, but his diagnosis is rather poorly contrasted with that of *testacea*. Fowler's (l.c.) is broadly similar but adds that the pronotal disc is dark. He records the insect as having occurred near Birmingham and Dumfries, and in other localities unspecified; Spalding (Lincs.) and several Irish counties are added in the Supplement (1913: 276). Whatever its taxonomic rank, the form seems very poorly known. In Britain, dark aberrations of *testacea* have evidently been mistaken for it; a series of what I take to be such a form stands over the name *bohemani* in G. C. Champion's collection, all from Aviemore. I have examined two specimens purporting to be the latter in D. Sharp's collection, one of which has a label 'Bohemanni/Scotia/à retourner s.v.p.' and thus appears to have been checked by a French authority (name not indicated). I cannot make them anything but, at most, slight variants of *testacea*—in any series of which they would in no way stand out. Whether or not, therefore, *M. bohemani* is a genuine species—a problem I do not pretend to have solved—it seems almost safe to say that we possess but one species of *Microcara* in this country, as far as known at present.

Cyphon Payk.—Since the 1945 *Check List* appeared, the British species of this genus have been very ably revised by the late D. K. Kevan (1962), with the addition of three to our list and figures of the often remarkable genitalia in both sexes.

EUCINETIDAE

Eucinetus meridionalis Lap.—A very recent addition to the British list

and the most interesting and surprising to have been made for half a century or more, the family being new to our fauna and the species a southern one not known from mid-Europe. It was discovered last autumn by Mr. A. E. Gardner near Lymington, South Hants., and—though only a few hibernating specimens had been found up to the time of writing—there is evidently a breeding colony in the vicinity (Gardner, 1969). (Such discoveries as this, *Stenelmis*, and certain others of the past decade or so surely confute those pessimists who have long insisted that no further startling additions to our seemingly native Coleoptera can be expected!).

CANTHARIDAE

Cantharis darwiniana Sharp.—This is placed in the *Check List* (p. 179) between *C. pallida* Goeze and *C. fulvicollis* F. (the former of which, of course, includes the later split-off species *C. cryptica* Ashe, 1947). It frequently happens in this work that nearly or very nearly allied species are separated by others with which they have relatively little in common; and the present case is a pronounced one, tending to obscure the extremely close affinity always recognized as existing between *C. darwiniana* and *C. rufa* L. (= *liturata* Fall.).

But the question here is whether *darwiniana* can really be maintained as a species, or whether it is not rather—as often suggested, e.g. by Fowler as long ago as 1890 (p. 139)—a 'biological form' or modification of *rufa* produced under the influence of its peculiar environment, viz. under seaweed on the coast. In fact it seems now to be generally considered as such; for instance, by Horion (p. 222) who, however, makes it a simple variety—which can scarcely be correct—and records it from the North German coast.

Examination of Sharp's type series (General Collection, British Museum, Nat. Hist.) and other material convinces me that this insect is indeed only a form of *C. rufa* and cannot be upheld as a valid species. Extreme specimens particularly of the female sex do have a distinctive aspect because of their small size and short limbs, but there seems to be no real dividing-line. The alleged structural characters are, when examined on the actual insects, purely comparative and, moreover, hardly stable. Joy's diagnosis on colour alone (p. 436) is useless, for the fact is that *both* forms vary widely in that respect and the coloration attributed specifically to *darwiniana* can be found in *rufa*, which, as every collector must know, is by far the most variable of our larger species of the genus. Joy, however, cannot have seen *rufa* with dark elytra, as he places it in the section of his key with 'el. yellow' (p. 435). Even the characteristic biotope of *darwiniana* seems not to be constant, for in the Power collection there are four examples (which certainly have the facies of the coastal insect) placed over that name from Woking, Surrey (Champion). In short, everything points to there being only one species involved.

Metacantharis haemorrhoidalis F. (= *clypeata* Ill.).—It has for some time been known on the Continent that the beetle which had up to then been passing under one or other of these names (mostly the first) is in reality a different species, *Cantharis decipiens* Baudi (1871), since found to be much commoner in Europe than the true *M. haemorrhoidalis*. It seems to be the only one of the two occurring in Britain (as also in Scandinavia), and consequently *C. decipiens* must replace *M. haemorrhoidalis* in our list. The latter, a more southern and alpine species in Europe,

has a differently-shaped dark blotch on the pronotum and is further distinguished, among other details, by the generic characters of the tarsal claws. (Incidentally, since *Ancistronycha*—which includes our *C. abdominalis* F.—appears to have been dropped as a genus, it seems doubtful whether Bourgeois's *Metacantharis* is any more worthy of retention.) *C. decipiens* was originally described from Sweden as a variety of *C. figurata* Mann. Fowler's description of *Telephorus haemorrhoidalis* (p. 140) applies, of course, to our insect—i.e. *C. decipiens*—and not to the other species.

Malthinus fasciatus Ol.—Here too the British list must be altered. Several years ago I noticed that the species known in this country from early times as *M. fasciatus* Ol. seemed to agree far better with the diagnosis of *M. seriepunctatus* Kies. (1951) in Reitter (p. 263) than with that of *fasciatus*. Ensuing correspondence with my friend Dr. Strand in Oslo much increased the suspicion that our species had been misdetermined. Finally the matter was put beyond all doubt when Dr. Walter Wittmer, the Swiss Cantharid specialist, kindly indentified as definite *seriepunctatus* a dissected male sent to him—having informed me that for certain separation of these two species the male genitalia are required. *M. fasciatus* is generally darker, thus somewhat more resembling *M. balteatus* Suffr.; the possibility of its being mixed with either that species or *seriepunctatus* in a few collections should not be overlooked, though more probably we do not possess it. The two in question are not very different in their distribution abroad, neither occurring as far north as Fennoscandia.

It may be as well to draw attention to Newbery's amendment (1896) of Fowler's statement of the secondary male characters of 'fasciatus' (i.e. *seriepunctatus*) and *balteatus* (p. 146; also in the key, p. 145)—since such a note can easily be passed over, and errors of determination result. Moreover, Joy (p. 432) more or less copies Fowler. Newbery gives the characters fully and correctly. Champion (1918) remarks that the male of *balteatus* is 'extremely rare'; in my experience however, like Newbery's, that is by no means the case.

MELYRIDAE

Malachius elegans Ol.—Introduced as British by Donisthorpe (1931¹) on a pair taken by him at Slapton Ley, S. Devon. However, in attempting to check the determination, I was forced to the conclusion that the beetles had been incorrectly named and could not be specifically separated from *M. marginellus* Ol., which, in its coastal form *pseudosardous* Recl. & v.d. Wiel (= *angustimarginalis* Donis.), abounds at the spot where the alleged *M. elegans* occurred. On comparing these last with *marginellus*, no appreciable difference of structure was revealed, but only one of coloration, viz. that in the supposed *elegans* there is no orange at the sides of the pronotum (in 'var.' *pseudosardous* this colour is reduced from a very broad to a narrow border). The British so-called *elegans* are thus, in my view, extreme aberrations of the above variety—or rather, local form—of *marginellus*; and as such, the present species must, I think, be dropped from the list. Donisthorpe gives a description, with figures of the male antenna and eytral apex; to judge from this, the true *M. elegans* (unknown to me, and ignored by Reitter (1911) though Horion (p. 229) gives it a wide range in central Europe) must be structurally very near *marginellus*—in any case sufficiently so to require comparison, yet Donisthorpe does not once mention it.

M. lusitanicus Er. (v. *australis* Rey).—Another *Malachius* added to our fauna by the same author (1931²) on a single female from Windsor Forest, and included in Joy's book (p. 621-2). I have always suspected that most likely some mistake had been made over its identity, and after a careful examination am quite satisfied that it is merely an example of the small form (v. *immaculicollis* M. & R.) of *M. bipustulatus* L., with the third antennal segment perhaps a trifle longer than usual relative to the fourth; but there is no real difference. When the specimen is put beside v. *immaculicollis* in the same collection, their identity is evident, and it is curious that the comparison did not seem to occur to Donisthorpe—particularly as he had this form in his collection from the same locality. *M. lusitanicus* must therefore be expunged from the British list.

CLERIDAE

Trichodes apiarius L. and *T. alvearius* F.—I have already discussed fully the question of the status of these species in our fauna (Allen, 1967), and reached the decided conclusion that they must have been indigenous, dying out probably towards the middle of last century or perhaps somewhat later. Here therefore I need only call attention to the matter, and recommend that both be restored to our list as extinct natives.

Thaneroclerus buquetii Lefebvre.—Kloet & Hincks (p. 180) include this Indian Clerid as British with the symbol for 'introduced but established'. The correctness of this seems open to doubt. The only British record of the beetle I have ever seen is of its having been found breeding in Bombay ginger at the British Museum, where it was predacious on *Lasioderma serricorne* F., by C. O. Waterhouse (Fowler & Donisthorpe, p. 280); and it seems most unlikely that the species would be able to naturalize itself here outside warehouses and the like. In that case it is in the same class as a great multitude of introductions which may breed for a short time in artificial conditions but really have nothing to do with the British fauna properly speaking; and it is better that our list should not be cluttered up with them (see Allen, 1964). On the other hand the Australian *Paratillus carus* Newm., for instance (in the same family), is rightly included and marked as established, as it has been repeatedly taken in the open under conditions that fairly show it to have accommodated itself to our species of *Lyctus* as a permanent resident. Unless a stronger case can be made out for *T. buquetii* than the above, I think it would be best omitted.

Necrobia rufipes Deg.—Some years ago I noticed that my short series of this species comprised two well-marked forms, one having distinct rows of larger punctures and longer, blacker, upstanding hairs on the elytra besides the shorter less erect pubescence, while the other was almost uniformly puncto-pubescent. The differences were very obvious on comparison, rather suggesting the presence of two distinct species. British works threw no light on the problem, but foreign ones plainly identified the first form above as v. *pilifera* Reitt.—the other being regarded as the typical state. The two forms were found to be present in equal proportions in the British Museum material, and the late Mr. D. K. Kevan (to whom I had mentioned the matter) reported the same for his own and that of the Royal Scottish Museum. This suggested that we might here have to do with an unusual kind of sexual dimorphism—characters of sculpture and vestiture being, as a rule, specific rather than sexual—an idea proved correct by dissection of a number of specimens of both forms. Later (from

Dr. A. Strand, I believe) I learnt that the problem had been solved as long ago as 1926 by Stolz, who demonstrated that the so-called var. *pilifera* was actually the female of *N. rufipes*—agreeing, of course, with the conclusion arrived at by Kevan and myself. But Stolz's finding not having been noticed in our literature, as far as I am aware, other coleopterists in this country may well have been puzzled as I was.

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Collecting in Spain, 1969

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From May 23rd to June 2nd, 1969, I stayed in Madrid, and was able to collect Lepidoptera in several localities in the district. The season was a late one, due to cold weather in the weeks preceding my arrival. During my stay the weather was consistently fine and sunny, though not really hot until May 30th. Furthermore, when the weather was hot in Madrid, there was often a gentle but cool breeze in the foothills of the mountains where I did most collecting. This certainly reduced the numbers of insects on the wing, as shown by their increase on occasions when the breeze abated.

On the morning of May 23rd I was pleased to see a few fresh specimens of *Iphiclides podalirius* L. (spp. *feisthameli* Dup.) and *Pararge aegeria* L. (form *aegeria*) flying in suburban gardens in Madrid. In the afternoon I drove to the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama north-west of the city. The sky was overcast much of the time, but on scrubland with many flowers we found a fair number of butterflies. *Zerynthia rumina* L. was common, but most specimens were worn. Fritillaries were much in evidence, especially *Melitaea phoebe* Schiff., and also *M. cinxia* L., *Mellicta athalia* Rott. and a few *Euphydryas aurinia* Rott. (the rust-